



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Wayne F. MacCallum, *Director*

Massachusetts Canada Goose Management Regulations

On August 11, 2006, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which shares authority with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) over Canada geese, recently released a final rule that transfers more authority relative to management of nuisance resident Canada goose populations to the state wildlife agency. This action is in response to growing impacts from high populations of resident Canada geese, which can damage property, agriculture, and natural resources in parks and other areas. The new rule provides that from March 1 – August 31, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, the state agency with jurisdiction over wildlife, will now be the sole entity issuing depredation permits to control local nuisance resident Canada goose problems. This will streamline the issuance process during the spring and summer months. Previously both the USFWS and MassWildlife were required to co-sign permits. Goose hunting regulations remain unchanged. Any landowners experiencing resident goose problems must still contact MassWildlife for information and permits regarding control options.

For years, both MassWildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have worked together closely to provide relief for property owners experiencing nuisance goose problems. Feeding prohibitions, erecting barriers and scare tactics which do not require any permits are among the actions which have been and will continue to be recommended by MassWildlife. The issuance of depredation permits addressing nuisance goose situations will continue as it has in the past, with MassWildlife taking on a larger role in permit issuance procedures during the spring and summer, when migrant geese are not present in the state.

The Fisheries and Wildlife Board has also approved early and late goose hunting seasons to control resident Canada goose populations. Recent goose population estimates indicate that these targeted hunting seasons have stabilized resident Canada goose populations. However, in eastern Massachusetts, the absence of waterfowl hunting due to local hunting related ordinances and feeding activities have contributed to large, localized resident Canada goose population in urban areas.

More information about Canada geese and tips for preventing problems may be found in the Wildlife area of the agency's website, www.mass.gov/masswildlife. For answers to questions regarding goose depredation permits, contact: Tom O'Shea at 508/792-7270.

www.masswildlife.org

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